

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAMA KO 02549 211627Z

ACTION AF-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

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AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMA KO 2549

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ML

SUBJECT: TRIALS OF TUAREG REBELS AND 1976 COUP PLOTTERS BY
SPECIAL STATE SECURITY COURT

REF: (A) BAMA KO 2335, (B) 76 BAMA KO 1496 (NOTAL), (C) 76 BAMA KO
1408 (NOTAL)

1. AFTER JUDGING A SERIES OF CORRUPTION CASES, THE MALIAN SPECIAL
COURT FOR STATE SECURITY, WHICH OPENED ON JUNE 1 (REFTEL A), FIN-
ISHED TEN DAYS OF ACTIVITY WITH THE TRIALS OF TUAREG SECESSIONISTS
AND APRIL 1976 COUP PLOT LEADERS.

2. THE OFFICIAL DAILY L'ESSOR (OF JUNE 14) REPORTED THE JUNE 6
SENTENCING OF SIX MEN ACCUSED OF HAVING LED TUAREG REBELLIONS OF
1962-63. THE GOAL OF REBELLION, ACCORDING TO PROSECUTORS, WAS
TO BRING ABOUT SECESSION OF THE ADRAR DES IFORAS REGION OF NORTH-
ERN MALI, ALTHOUGH THE DEFENDANTS INSISTED THEY WERE MERELY PRO-
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PAGE 02 BAMA KO 02549 211627Z

TESTING ABUSES OF POWER OF THE FORMER MODIBO KEITA REGIME. THE
REBELS WERE DEFEATED BY THE ARMY IN LATE 1963. MOST WERE KILLED,
AND THE SURVIVORS, DEFENDANTS IN THIS TRIAL, HAVE BEEN IMPRISONED
SINCE 1963. FIVE OF THE SIX MEN (ONE OF WHOM HAS ESCAPED SINCE
THE TRIAL) WERE CONDEMNED TO DEATH; THE SIXTH TO LIFE AT HARD
LABOR. ALTHOUGH, FOLLOWING TRADITIONAL MALIAN PRACTICE, IT IS UN-
LIKELY THE DEATH SENTENCES WILL BE CARRIED OUT, THE PRETRIAL IMPRI-

SONMENT OF THESE MEN FOR 13 YEARS RAISES QUESTIONS OF GOM RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.

3. TRIAL OF 1976 COUP PLOTTERS, REPORTED IN L'ESSOR (EDITION OF JUNE 15), LASTED 72 HOURS AND COUNTED 20 DEFENDANTS. DEFENDANTS, MEMBER OF VARIOUS ARMY UNITS STATIONED AT KATI, OUTSIDE BAMAKO, WERE ACCUSED OF CONSPIRING TO OVERTHROW AND ELIMINATE THE RULING MILITARY COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL LIBERATION. BEFORE THEY COULD ACT, HOWEVER, THEY WERE DISCOVERED AND ARRESTED AND HAVE SINCE AWAITED TRIAL. SEVEN OF THE CONSPIRATORS, INCLUDING THE ACCUSED RINGLEADER, ADJUTANT MAMADOU LAMINE SISSOKO, WERE SENTENCED TO DEATH. ELEVEN OTHERS WERE GIVEN VARYING TERMS AT HARD LABOR, WHILE THE FATE OF ONE WAS NOT DISCLOSED.

4. IN MAY 1976, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SEYDOU TRAORE PROMISED THE THEN CHARGE (REFTEL B) THAT DIPLOMATIC CORPS WOULD RECEIVE A FULL ACCOUNT OF ABORTIVE COUP OF APRIL 1976. WHILE THE TRIAL AND ARTICLE ARE PRESUMABLY TO BE TAKEN AS THE FULFILLMENT OF THAT COMMITMENT, QUESTIONS RAISED AT TIME OF COUP ATTEMPT CONCERNING POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION OF CERTAIN MILITARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS REMAIN AND PROBABLY WILL STAY UN-ANSWERED. ALSO INTERESTING IS ABSENCE OF ANY MENTION OF THE MAN REPUTED AT THE TIME BY FRENCH AND WEST GERMAN EMBASSIES TO BE PLOT LEADER, COMMANDANT SORY KEITA (REFTEL C).

5. IN HANDING OUT DEATH SENTENCES AND LONG PRISON TERMS IN THESE
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PAGE 03 BAMAKO 02549 211627Z

TWO TRIALS AS WELL AS PRECEDING CORRUPTION TRIALS, MILITARY COMMITTEE IS SEEKING TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THREATS TO EXISTING ORDER WILL MEET SWIFT AND SEVERE COUNTERACTION. THE PRESENTATION OF ECONOMIC CORRUPTION AND POLITICAL SUBVERSION TRIALS IN ONE PACKAGE IS PROBABLY DESIGNED TO LINK THE TWO IN THE EYES OF THE PUBLIC AS BEING EQUALLY HARMFUL TO MALIAN NATIONAL INTERESTS. IN A PERIOD WHEN THE GOVERNMENT IS EXPERIENCING A DECLINE IN PUBLIC SUPPORT, THE SIGNAL IS THAT SUCH ACTIVITIES CANNOT AND WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
BYRNE

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